

Background

Adolescent pregnancy rates are disproportionately higher in rural counties compared to metropolitan areas, often attributed to inconsistent contraceptive use among young males. This inconsistency contributes to a higher prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among adolescents in rural areas. Access to clinics offering education and contraception plays a crucial role in reducing teen pregnancy rates. In Flagstaff, Arizona, this issue is particularly prevalent. This project aimed to assess the efficacy of two 45-minute in-person education and prevention sessions on available contraception use and sexually transmitted infections. Educational sessions were presented to pregnant and student parents enrolled in Summit High School in Flagstaff, Arizona. Topics presented were based on previous needs-based assessments conducted by North Country Healthcare. The project is relevant because of the disproportionately high rates of STD/teen pregnancy in the area. We collaborated with existing programs, such as Dr. Meredith Merkley's School-Based Health Clinic Early Pregnancy Program at Summit High School, to provide comprehensive education and support to this vulnerable population.

Objectives

1. Learn what contraception is available for use and how to properly utilize the contraception to maximize efficacy.
2. Understand the different types of STIs as well as if/how they can be treated. How to minimize STI contraction.
3. Enhance participants' understanding of standard safe sex practices including proper consent.

Methods

This quality improvement project aimed to assess the efficacy of two 45-minute, in-person sexual education (SED) sessions. The content of the sessions included information regarding currently available contraception, as well as up-to-date strategies for preventing sexually transmitted infections. Each educational session began and ended with time allotted for students to participate in an anonymous and voluntary survey (see "survey" in the appendix). The survey included questions regarding their understanding of the aforementioned topics before (pre-survey) and after (post-survey) the educational session. Following the delivery of the educational sessions, the project team analyzed the survey responses to determine the efficacy of each session.

Results

Pre- and post-session surveys indicated no significant change in participant responses before and after the intervention. The study had a low overall power (N=7). According to survey data, student participants reported feeling confident and familiar with the topics presented both before and after the sessions. Student engagement was overall high. Session presenters reported addressing misconceptions and misinformation presented by the participants. However, it was evident to presenters that the depth of knowledge on the topics presented was at a very basic and superficial level. Key topics addressed in Session One included an introduction to the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Presenters discussed symptoms, modes of transmission, and treatment options. STI statistics and prevention strategies were also discussed. Session Two covered the topic of contraception, including types, effectiveness, and benefits and adverse effects. Throughout the sessions, students were encouraged to ask questions and were provided with a question and answer session at the end of each session.

Session 1- Pre and Post Survey Results Questions 1-3

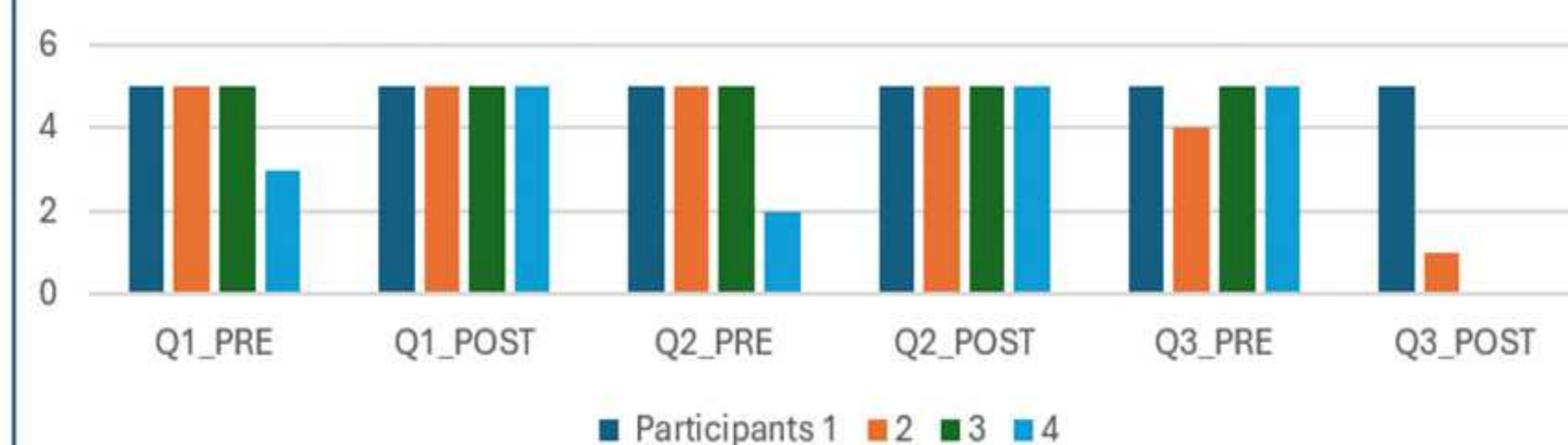


Figure 1 Q4 and 5 not included, see data table

Session 2- Pre and Post Survey Results Questions 1-3

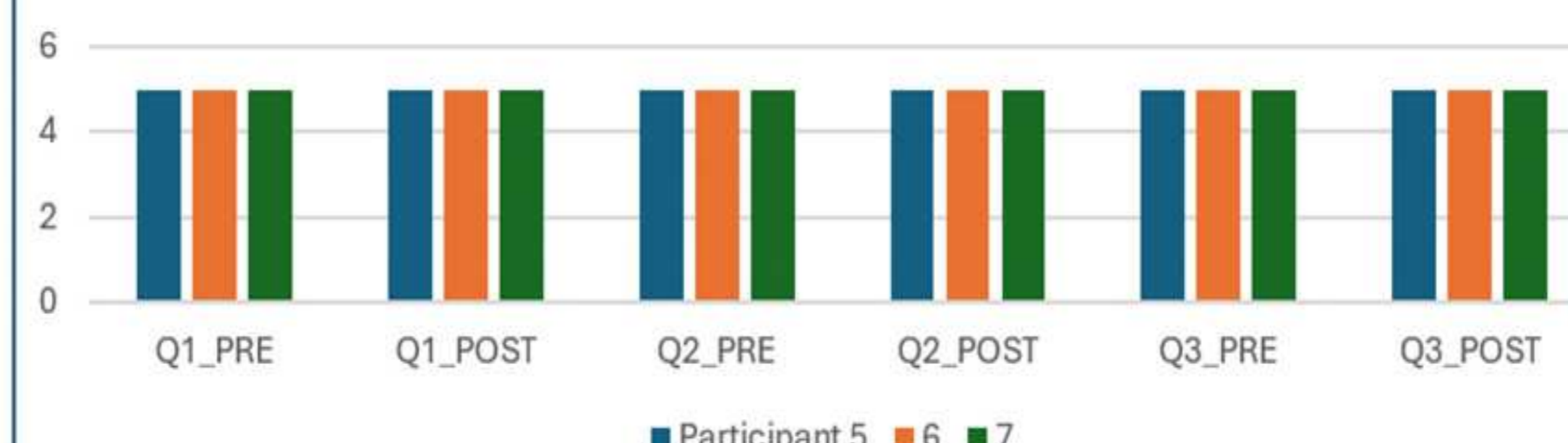


Figure 2 Q4 and 5 not included, see data table

Discussion

This project contributes valuable insights into the effectiveness of education programs targeting teenage mothers and expectant minors regarding contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), benefiting community health centers. Proper education of adolescent and teenage participants has the potential to lower the number of patients with unplanned pregnancies, STIs, or cases of sexual abuse. The collaboration with existing programs and utilization of pre- and post-session surveys offer a structured approach to assess the impact of education sessions on participants' knowledge and attitudes. This information can be utilized by community health centers to tailor their educational initiatives, improve outreach strategies, and enhance the quality of care provided to this vulnerable population. Furthermore, the project's focus on health equity and collaboration with local stakeholders demonstrates a commitment to addressing community health needs and promoting overall well-being. The educational content could potentially be converted into an educational handout or a video that is part of standard education for younger patients, thus extending the reach of the project's impact beyond the scope of the initial sessions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this project highlights the importance of education programs targeting teenage mothers and expectant minors regarding contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in community health centers. Despite limitations such as a non-randomized small sample size, recall bias from self-reported responses, and limited follow-up leading to attrition, the project demonstrates the potential impact of structured education sessions on participants' knowledge and attitudes. Future efforts should focus on addressing these limitations to enhance the effectiveness and reach of such programs, ultimately improving the quality of care provided to this vulnerable population.

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References